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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/026,886	12/27/2001	Vladimir Shlain	1078-US	1156

24505 7590 07/27/2005

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EXAMINER

TRAN, MAI T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2129

DATE MAILED: 07/27/2005

MAILED 07/27/2005
U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1450

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/026,886

Applicant(s)

SHLAIN ET AL.

Examiner

Mai T. Tran

Art Unit

2129

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 5/24/2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 8-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 8-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' amendment dated May 24, 2005, responding to the January 24, 2004 Office Action provided in the rejection of claims 1-13, wherein claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, and 13 have been amended. Claim 7 has been cancelled without prejudice and new claim 14 has been added. Claims 1-14 remain pending in the application and which have been fully considered by the examiner.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by “DCS-1: A Fuzzy Logic Expert System for Automatic Defect Classification of Semiconductor Wafer Defects” by Dr. Marc Luria et al, hereinafter Luria.

Claim 1

A system for automatic object classification comprising:

means for applying a plurality of binary rules to an object, wherein any of said binary rules is operative to classify said object to one of a pair of classes (page 2101, paragraph 3, lines 16-18); and

means for determining to which of said classes said object is classified the greatest number of times subsequent to the application of said binary rules (page 2103, paragraph 5.5, lines 2-3).

Claim 2

A system according to claim 1 and further comprising means for automatically generating said binary rules (page 2102, paragraph 5.1, lines 2-8). Automatically changing the rules as new crystals are being viewed since the comparison being made is for a new crystal and thus the classification of defects is based on wafers from that crystal.

Claim 3

A system according to claim 2 and further comprising a learning set having a plurality of said objects, wherein each of said objects in said learning set is pre-classified as belonging to one of said classes, and wherein said means for automatically generating is operative to generate said binary rules using said learning set (page 2100, paragraph 2.2, lines 17-21).

Claim 5

A system according to claim 1 wherein:

each of said binary rules includes a first part and a second part, (Examiner interprets first part as Class A, and second part as Class B)

said means for determining is operative to calculate using said first part a degree of belonging (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 34-46) of said object to one of said classes in said class pair,

said means for determining is operative to calculate using said second part a degree of belonging (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 34-46) of said object to the other of said classes in said class pair, and

said means for applying is operative to select one of said classes in said class pairs to which said degree of belonging of said object is greater (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 51-53).

Claim 6

A system according to claim 5 wherein each of said parts comprises at least one fuzzy logic formula including at least one named predicate related to a numerical characteristic of one of said objects, and wherein said means for determining is operative to calculate said degrees of belonging using said fuzzy-logic formulae (page 2103, paragraph 5.3, lines 2-5).

Claim 8

A system according to claim 1 wherein said objects are semiconductor defect images and wherein said classes describe defect classes for application in semiconductor production (page 2100, title).

Claim 9

A method for automatic object classification comprising:

applying a plurality of binary rules to an object, wherein any of said binary rules is operative to classify said object to one of a pair of a plurality of classes (page 2101, paragraph 3, lines 16-18); and

determining to which of said classes said object is classified the greatest number of times subsequent to the application of said binary rules (page 2103, paragraph 5.5, lines 2-3).

Claim 10

A method according to claim 9 and further comprising:

pre-classifying a plurality of objects in a learning set as belonging to one of said classes (page 2100, paragraph 2.2, lines 17-21); and

automatically generating said binary rules (page 2102, paragraph 5.1, lines 2-8) using said learning set, wherein any of said binary rules of any of said pairs of classes is generated using any of said objects in said learning set that are pre-classified as belonging to said pair of classes (page 2100, paragraph 2.2, lines 17-21). Automatically changing the rules as new crystals are being viewed since the comparison being made is for a new crystal and thus the classification of defects is based on wafers from that crystal.

Claim 12

A method according to claim 9 wherein:

said determining step comprises calculating a degree of belonging of said object to one of said classes in said class pair using a first part of each of said binary rules (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 34-46),

said determining step comprises calculating a degree of belonging of said object to the other of said classes in said class pair using a second part of each of said binary rules (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 34-46), and

said applying step comprises selecting one of said classes in said class pairs to which said degree of belonging of said object is greater (page 2101, paragraph 3, right column, lines 51-53).

Claim 13

A method according to claim 12 wherein said determining step comprises calculating said degrees of belonging using a fuzzy-logic formula included in each of said parts and including at least one named predicate related to a numerical characteristic of one of said objects (page 2103, paragraph 5.3, lines 2-5).

Claim 14

This is a computer-implementable program version of the claimed system discussed above in claim 1, wherein all claimed limitations have also been addressed and cited as set forth above.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-6, and 8-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Philip Laird et al, hereinafter Laird, and further in view of Luria.

Claim 1

Laird teaches a system for automatic object classification comprising:

means for applying a plurality of binary rules to an object, wherein any of said binary rules is operative to classify said object to one of a pair of classes; and

Laird fails to teach a system that can determine to which of said classes said object is classified the greatest number of times subsequent to the application of said binary rules. Luria teaches that after all the rules have been evaluated, the classification with the highest truth value is displayed. The purpose of this system is to provide the descriptions of defect classes more exactly. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to combine Laird in view of Luria for the purpose of having a system with exact descriptions of defect classes.

Claim 2

Laird fails to teach a system with means for automatically generating said binary rules. Luria teaches a system according to claim 1 and further comprising means for automatically changing the rules as new crystals are being viewed since the comparison being made is for a new crystal and thus the classification of defects is based on wafers from that crystal.

Claim 3

Laird fails to teach a system comprising a learning set having a plurality of said objects, wherein each of said objects in said learning set is pre-classified as belonging to one of said classes, and wherein said means for automatically generating is operative to generate said binary rules using said learning set. Luria teaches that the defects on the wafer have been classified and the classification information is passed to a database system.

Claim 4

Laird teaches supervised learning classifier system.

Claim 5

Laird fails to teach a system according to claim 1 wherein:

each of said binary rules includes a first part and a second part,

said means for determining is operative to calculate using said first part a degree of belonging of said object to one of said classes in said class pair,

said means for determining is operative to calculate using said second part a degree of belonging of said object to the other of said classes in said class pair, and

said means for applying is operative to select one of said classes in said class pairs to which said degree of belonging of said object is greater. Laird teaches an expert system using fuzzy linguistic quantifiers to refer to the full range of truth values between true and false. Thus determine the degree of belonging of said object to one or the other of said classes in said class pair. The fuzzy truth value of a conjunctive is the minimum of the conjuncts and the truth value of a disjunctive is the maximum of the disjuncts.

Claim 6

Laird fails to teach a system according to claim 5 wherein each of said parts comprises at least one fuzzy logic formula including at least one named predicate related to a numerical characteristic of one of said objects, and wherein said means for determining is operative to calculate said degrees of belonging using said fuzzy-logic formulae. Laird teaches a fuzzy logic expert system in order to translate inexact characterizations of a class into a language that the computer could understand.

Claim 8

Laird fails to teach a system according to claim 1 wherein said objects are semiconductor defect images and wherein said classes describe defect classes for application in semiconductor production. Luria teaches a system for automatic defect classification of semiconductor wafer defects.

Claim 9

Laird teaches a method for automatic object classification comprising:
applying a plurality of binary rules to an object, wherein any of said binary rules is operative to classify said object to one of a pair of classes; and

Laird fails to teach a method that can determine to which of said classes said object is classified the greatest number of times subsequent to the application of said binary rules. Luria teaches that after all the rules have been evaluated, the classification with the highest truth value is displayed. This method will provide the descriptions of defect classes more exact. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to combine Laird in view of Luria for the purpose of having a method with exact descriptions of defect classes.

Claim 10

Laird fails to teach a method according to claim 9 and further comprising:
pre-classifying a plurality of objects in a learning set as belonging to one of said classes,
and
automatically generating said binary rules using said learning set wherein any of said binary rules of any of said pairs of classes is generated using any of said objects in said learning

set that are pre-classified as belonging to said pair of classes. Luria teaches that the defects on the wafer have been classified and the classification information is passed to a database system.

Claim 11

Laird teaches a method of classification using supervised learning.

Claim 12

Laird fails to teach a method according to claim 9 wherein:

said determining step comprises calculating a degree of belonging of said object to one of said classes in said class pair using a first part of each of said binary rules,

said determining step comprises calculating a degree of belonging of said object to the other of said classes in said class pair using a second part of each of said binary rules, and

said applying step comprises selecting one of said classes in said class pairs to which said degree of belonging of said object is greater. Luria teaches an expert system using fuzzy linguistic quantifiers to refer to the full range of truth values between true and false. Thus determine the degree of belonging of said object to one or the other of said classes in said class pair. The fuzzy truth value of a conjunctive is the minimum of the conjuncts and the truth value of a disjunctive is the maximum of the disjuncts.

Claim 13

Laird fails to teach a method according to claim 12 wherein said determining step comprises calculating said degrees of belonging using a fuzzy-logic formula included in each of said parts and including at least one named predicate related to a numerical characteristic of one of said objects. Luria teaches a fuzzy logic expert system in order to translate inexact characterizations of a class into a language that the computer could understand.

Claim 14

This is a computer-implementable program version of the claimed system discussed above in claim 1, wherein all claimed limitations have also been addressed and cited as set forth above.

RESPONSE TO ARGUMENT

Applicants argue:

1. **35 U.S.C § 102 Rejections:**

- that *Luria does not teach the application of “binary” rules, nor that defect images are classified to “to one class of a class pair taken from a plurality of class pairs.”*

Examiner respectfully disagrees. Luria teaches the classification process to determine the class of each defect. The basic idea of classification a defect is to categorize the defect into a particular class according to a binary rule (i.e. rule 1 will specify whether a defect belongs to class 1 or class 2)

- that *“the invention of claim 1 uses $N*(N-1)/2$ binary rules for N classes, whereas Luria uses N rules for N classes.”* Examiner respectfully disagrees. If a binary rule for a class pair is applied then it should result in $(2^n - 1)$ rules for 2^n classes with n being the number of levels. Examiner finds that applicants are being ambiguous in claiming binary rule with their formula. Applicants’ formula is only correct for one level. Applicants need to disclose the correct structure with their claimed binary rule. Therefore, it is considered that claim 1 is not patentable

over Luria. Since claim 1 is not considered to be patentable, the claims not separately arranged for are also considered to be unpatentable.

2. **35 U.S.C § 103 Rejections**: that “*in Laird application of a binary rule is related to one of a pair of feature value diapasons.*” Examiner respectfully disagrees. Laird teaches a binary-tree classifier which classifies objects into a finite set of categories, which represent feature value or another words class labels. Therefore, it is considered that claim 1 is not patentable over Laird in view of Luria. Since claim 1 is not considered to be patentable, the claims not separately arranged for are also considered to be unpatentable.

CONCLUSION

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

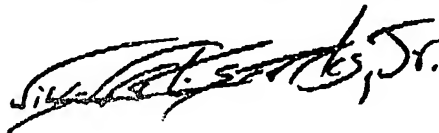
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mai T. Tran whose telephone number is (571) 272-4238. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00am-- 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Knight can be reached on (571) 272-3687. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



M.T.T
Patent Examiner
Date: 7/18/2005

Wilbert L. Starks
Primary Examiner
Tech Center 2100